

Agricultural Competitiveness White Paper Submission - IP274
Primary Industries Education Foundation
Submitted 15 April 2014



Primary Industries Education Foundation



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Agricultural Competitiveness Taskforce
Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet
PO Box 6500
CANBERRA ACT 2600
<https://agriculturalcompetitiveness.dpmc.gov.au/online-submissions>**Error! Hyperlink reference not valid.**

Dear Sir/Madam

I am writing on behalf of The Primary Industries Education Foundation to inform you of what we believe is an important cornerstone of the future competitiveness of agricultural industries. The Primary Industries Education Foundation was initiated by Minister McGauran in 2007 and is the peak body relating to primary industries education in Australian schools. It is operated by a skills based board which has been appointed by representatives of the education, government and primary industry sectors.

The Foundation has been active since 2010 in developing strategies for better learning about primary industries in Australian schools. There have been a number of recent enquiries into agricultural education and training in Australia. These have all supported the operation of the Foundation and see it as playing a key role in the future education of school students about food and fibre production, and developing interests and motivation for a career in primary industries.

The Foundation believes that children should start learning about where their food and fibre comes from early in their life at school. The Foundation therefore supports initiatives from pre-school to year twelve in having better learning opportunities for children about food and fibre.

Research by Nobel Laureate, Professor James Heckman emphasises that the highest rates of return on human capital comes from investment in early childhood development and demonstrates how those rates on return diminish as the child grows. Therefore the idea of investing early in the school career is a good way of ensuring that the principles of food and fibre education are well established in a child's cognitive development. This strategic investment can be built upon in later years, through promotion of career pathways and attracting the next generation of farmers and RD&E professionals. In turn, these will enhance agriculture's contribution to regional communities (Issue 5) and improve the competitiveness of inputs to the supply chain (Issue 6).

I therefore urge that the Taskforce recognises this need and that the Australian Government continues to support learning about primary industries, in this case agriculture in Australian Schools.

Yours sincerely,

Ben Stockwin
CEO
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15th of April 2014